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SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGES IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT FOR  
CROATIAN FOREIGN POLICY

REF: ZAGREB 00453

Classified By: Peter D'Amico, Pol, Reasons 1.4 B/D

11. (C) While Prime Minister Kosor's ruling coalition and government consist of nearly the same membership as her predecessor's, Croatian foreign policy will be conducted in a significantly different manner than under PM Sanader. Early indications are that Foreign Minister Gordan Jandrokovic has emerged in the Kosor government with a stronger voice on foreign affairs.

12. (C) Sanader, who served as Deputy Foreign Minister in a previous HDZ government and speaks fluent English, German, and Italian, was comfortable formulating Croatian foreign policy with little input from the MFA. Sanader would frequently make and implement Croatia's foreign policy via personal meetings with European leaders, particularly those with center-right backgrounds. While Kosor has some experience with foreign policy, she lacks the extensive background and connections that Sanader enjoyed and she is not as comfortable using foreign languages. Jandrokovic, who speaks good English and has been working on foreign policy most of his career, will have greater influence on key issues of interest to the USG such as the border dispute between Croatia and Slovenia. Additionally, Jandrokovic has a solid political base in his hometown of Bjelovar, making him valuable asset for the stability of the new government.

13. (C) Another key difference between the two governments is the change at the number two position at the MFA. Sanader kept tight control over decision making at the MFA by having Bianca Matkovic, one of his longest serving and most loyal allies, maintain discipline as the State Secretary for Political Affairs. After Matkovic's departure from the MFA to serve as Minister without Portfolio, career diplomatic Davor Bozinovic has taken over as State Secretary for Political Affairs (reftel). In a sign of Jandrokovic's increased authority over his own ministry, Kosor gave Jandrokovic a free hand in choosing his new deputy, whereas Matkovic had been directly assigned to the position by Sanader. Bozinovic, who also served as President Mesic's Chief of Staff in 2004, is a respected technocrat with solid ties to both sides of the political spectrum. Jandrokovic personally asked Bozinovic to accept the Political Affairs position, and Bozinovic should now play a significant role as Jandrokovic's key advisor and in formulating Croatia's foreign policy, building on the credit he earned as Croatia's Ambassador to NATO during Croatia's successful effort to join the Alliance.

14. (C) COMMENT: The departure of Sanader as well as Matkovic, who was Sanader's proxy and enforcer at the MFA, gives Jandrokovic the opportunity to assert more of his vision for the ministry, particularly in terms of personnel. The appointment of Bozinovic is an important early sign of Jandrokovic's growing influence. Both Jandrokovic and Bozinovic should emerge as key players in creating Croatian foreign policy in the new government. Furthermore, while changes in the ruling HDZ upon Sanader's departure have moved the party rightward, Jandrokovic is a representative of a

younger, more moderate wing of the HDZ which is in the USG interest to strengthen. Early meetings with their USG counterparts will help solidify their already strong views on the benefits of close cooperation with the USG, particularly on key issues such as promoting stability in Southeastern Europe through Euro-Atlantic integration, and working together to bring peace and security to Afghanistan. END COMMENT.  
WALKER